

North Birmingham Communication Plan Overview

Themes:

Region 4's multimedia efforts in North Birmingham communities support each of the Administrator themes. Perhaps the most relevant is: *Making a Visible Difference in Communities*.

Regional Themes: (*Themes guide regional efforts for conducting operations in North Birmingham communities*).

- 1) We will conduct a comprehensive Investigation
- 2) Actions will be carried out as expeditiously as possible
- 3) Sound Science is the backbone of our decision-making
- 4) Agency commitment to protecting human health and the environment
- 5) Building collaborative relations with communities and state and local elected officials

Situational Analysis

External Environment (*Key external forces affecting regional communication and outreach initiatives in North Birmingham include the following*):

Challenges:

- 100 plus years of unresolved legacy contamination in North Birmingham communities
- Community members expectations
- Advocacy groups expectations
- Lack of effective communication between neighborhood associations, environmental groups, and city government
- Opposition to EPA efforts from the Birmingham Business Alliance
- Previous sensationalized coverage by local media (Deadly Deception), and advocacy group G.A.S.P (upcoming documentary)

Opportunities:

- Post-secondary educational institution involvement (UAB, Miles College, Sanford University, Birmingham Southern – faculty and students)
- Birmingham City Schools Board of Education
- Media (Birmingham News, ABC33/40, CBS News)
- North Birmingham Community Coalition
- State and local elected officials

Internal Environment (*Key internal forces affecting regional communication and outreach initiatives in North Birmingham include the following*):

Challenges:

- Need for increased coordination of ongoing activities

Opportunities:

- Regional multimedia approach provides opportunities for increased coordination and communication on the spectrum of activities in North Birmingham

Audiences:

Congressional Delegation (*Expect high congressional interest from the following*):

- Spencer Bachus (6th District - R)
- Ms. Terri Sewell (7th District - D)

State Representatives:

- Ms. Mary Moore, Alabama House of Representatives, 59th District (Jefferson County)

Local elected officials:

- Birmingham Mayor's Office
- Birmingham City Council

Citizens Groups:

- North Birmingham Community Coalition
- General public in neighboring communities

Advocacy Groups:

- G.A.S.P. (Greater Birmingham Alliance to Stop Pollution)
- P.A.N.I.C. (People in Neighborhood Industrial Contamination)

Environmental Community:

- Alabama Department of Environmental Management
- Alabama Partners for Clean Air
- Scenic Alabama
- Alabama Rivers Alliance
- Cahaba River Society
- The Nature Conservancy
- Alabama Environmental Council
- Jones Valley urban Farm

- Auntie Litter Inc.
- Environmental Management
- Black Warrior Riverkeeper Inc.
- Village Creek Society
- Freshwater Land Trust

Health-based Community Groups:

- Alabama Department of Public Health
- Alabama Lung Association
- Alabama Asthma Coalition

Industry (North Birmingham is a heavily industrialized area. Expect surrounding industries to be concerned as the perception of a regulating agency's enforcement action may impact business practices).

- Walter Coke
- ABC Coke (Drummond Company, Inc.)
- Alabama Gas Company (ALAGASCO)
- KAMAC Services
- US Pipe

Local Media (Media outreach efforts have led to established working relationships with the following outlets):

- CBS 42
- ABC 33/40
- Fox 6
- NBC Alabama's 13 News
- Birmingham News

*Note: see attachment for detailed information on media coverage.

Channels (Including but not limited to):

- Public meetings
- One-on-One meetings
- Media
- Telephone calls
- Email
- Quarterly Newsletter
- North Birmingham Website
- Social Media

Messages

What Are We Doing?

- **Message:** EPA has conducted a thorough investigation to identify contaminants of concern and what needs to be cleaned up, and where. We are conducting a phased approach to the cleanup process.

Talking Points

- a) EPA has completed sampling to determine the extent of contamination present in the soil of properties at the 35th Avenue Superfund Site, and adjacent communities. EPA has also determined that further response actions are necessary to protect human health and the environment.
- b) EPA has provided results to residents who reside at or own property located in the boundary of the 35th Ave Superfund Site. EPA is currently conducting soil removal activities at the 50 most contaminated properties.
- c) EPA will continue to collect information and to determine what actions to take to address community environmental concerns.

What Does this mean?

- **Message:** EPA is committed to protecting human health and the environment, and to keeping community residents informed of potential environmental risks.

Talking Points

- a) EPA will continue to provide environmental education opportunities to help community members understand the risk associated with exposure to identified pollutants in the area, as well as the regulations governing them.
- b) EPA will continue to engage the newly formed North Birmingham Community Coalition through a series of meetings focusing on the community's environmental issues.
- c) Ensure community members are aware of the various resources provided by EPA to access public information (ie. Website, social media, and the site repository).

What Happens Next?

- **Message:** EPA's next steps in addressing environmental issues associated with North Birmingham communities will be achieved through assessment and cleanup; education and outreach; as well as compliance and enforcement.

Talking Points

- a) EPA will continue the removal actions on the 50 most contaminated properties with an expected completion date of October 2014.

- b) EPA will continue to identify potentially responsible parties as part its ongoing enforcement efforts.
- c) Ensure the affected community and local, state and federal officials are well informed and provided opportunities to work with the EPA on agency response activities.

Outreach/Product Distribution Strategy

- The regional outreach strategy will depend upon particular action taken by program. Each outreach activity and product will utilize a specific roll out plan identifying the audience to communicate with, timeline for the communication, the communicator, the method of delivery, and anticipated audience reaction. (See attached example)
- Additionally, each division in concert with the R4 Multimedia Group will be required to generate, and in some cases, update tough questions and answers associated with the action, also consider unresolved community issues, involvement from other agencies.

Evaluation/Feedback

Evaluation and feedback efforts will include, but is not limited to the following:

Observation: Observe individuals or groups to see how they are responding to certain messages.

Quantitative data Collection: Surveys, websites, blogs and other social networks will allow for collection of useful data. Examples are: tracking the number of daily or monthly visitors and page views. For blogs and social networks, track number of subscribers and number of comments left by visitors.

Qualitative data Analysis: Use data collected from web tracking or media monitoring services to conduct statistical analysis of the possible relationships between communication activities and external changes.

Content analysis: Used to assess the quality and tone of media coverage, or to review the content of specific programming that reaches an audience – usually from news media.

Opportunities for Feedback (including but not limited to)

- Face-to-Face meeting with key COIs
- Follow up community meetings
- Phone calls
- Pre-and post surveys
- Social media channels

North Birmingham Media Coverage

- Media outreach efforts have led to established working relationships with the following media outlets:
 - CBS 42
 - ABC 33/40
 - Fox 6
 - NBC Alabama's 13 News
 - Birmingham News
- CBS 42 Deadly Deception Documentary –
 - “Deadly Deception” is the umbrella title of an investigative project looking into environmental issues in the heavily industrialized neighborhoods of North Birmingham and surrounding communities.
 - CBS 42 has aired a continuing series of reports, a two-part documentary - Deadly Deception (which aired August 7, 2011) and Deadly Deception II – The Fugitive Factor (which aired September 20, 2012).
 - Deadly Deception II – The Fugitive Factor uncovers incriminating facts, interviews a whistleblower that shares new information, and confronts local officials in pursuit of answers residents cannot get on their own.
- News stories
 - Other TV news outlets (ABC 33/40, Fox 6, NBC Alabama's 13 News) have shown neutral increased coverage
 - Birmingham News has continually covered the air pollution and health issues in the north Birmingham area.

Product Distribution/Action Notification Plan

Audience	Material	Who will notify	When	Method of Delivery
General Public/ Press		James Pinkney	Proactive outreach to objective media, RTQ to others	
Website/ Twitter		Mary Cashin		
Congressmen: Spencer Bachus (6th District - R) Ms. Terri Sewell (7th District - D) Senators: Richard Shelby (R) Jeff Sessions (R) State Representative: (59 th District) Mary Moore	Congressional Notification	Allison Wise/Dionne Delli- Gatti (OCIR) OCIR Staff	September 23, early afternoon September 23, early afternoon	Call/email Call/email/meeting
ADEM Press Office		James Pinkney	September 23, early afternoon	e-mail, mail
North Birmingham Community Coalition		Stephanie Brown		e-mail/ mail/ meeting/call